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SUBJECT: HOW MANY FARDC SOLDIERS ARE IN THE KIVUS?

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On November 11, the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) completed a census of troops assigned to newly integrated units in the Kivus. Although registration was below projections, the numbers represent the first credible manpower base-line for chain of payments analysis, assessments of integration success, and a starting point for developing administrative capacity of a Congolese peacetime army under civilian control. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) Approximately 17,500 FARDC soldiers registered in the Kivus as part of the GDRC census supported by the European Union's Advisory and Assistance Mission for Security Reform in the Congo (EUSEC). This number represents 70 per cent of the expected 25,000 newly integrated soldiers. Possible explanations for the disparity can be attributed to a combination of three factors: fraud, deployment, and desertion.

Name, Rank, and Serial Number

¶3. (SBU) Fraud: As FARDC commanders serve double duty as paymaster, some find an incentive to pad unit payrolls for personal gain, as noted by one observer who joined a census team at Kimoka (Note: In integrated brigades participating in the EUSEC chain of payments initiative, FARDC commanders do not serve as paymasters. Nevertheless, lower-ranking paymasters in the EUSEC program are not free from command influence. End note). At this site, 25 kilometers west of Goma, census team members filled out standard three-page questionnaires with information obtained from routine questioning of soldiers, including a group of young men who could not recall their basic personal data and units of assignment. Under more intense questioning, a member of the small group confessed to impersonating a soldier. He explained that he was approached on the road by a man (later identified as the unit commander), who offered him \$30 per month from the fraudulently obtained salary--less an upfront \$2 investment for the FARDC uniform which the accomplice could keep. The census team went to investigate, found the commander on the road with a box of uniforms and pockets full of currency, and arrested him.

¶4. (SBU) Deployments and Desertions: Some units were deployed in remote areas preventing them from participating in the headcount. USG staff visiting Dungu in Haut-Uele District of Orientale Province, received reports from locals that up to 4,000 FARDC from the Kivu-based newly integrated units were deployed in the area. Lastly, some new FARDC soldiers deserted for reasons such as poor living conditions, lack of timely pay, or not adjusting well to the life of a soldier.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Separation of the chain of command from the chain of payments is a critical component of

professionalization of the armed forces. Although fraud was not unexpected, we were surprised at the legitimate deployment of newly integrated FARDC units outside their home provinces. At the outset of integration, militia commanders were averse to deployment outside their home regions. These deployments may be a positive sign of a FARDC ready to serve where ordered. End comment.

GARVELINK